Local Government Boundary Commission For England Report No. 54

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 54

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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PW

To the Rt Hon Roy Jenkins, MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR REVISED ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BOROUGH OF LUTON IN THE COUNTY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

1. We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, having carried out our initial review of the electoral arrangements for the borough of Luton in accordance with the requirements of section 63 of, and Schedule 9 to, the Local Government Act 1972, present our proposals for the future electoral arrangements for that borough.

2. In accordance with the procedure laid down in section 60(1) and (2) of the 1972 Act, notice was given on 13 February 1974 that we were to undertake this review. This was incorporated in a consultation letter addressed to the Luton Borough Council, copies of which were circulated to the Bedfordshire County Council, the Members of Parliament for the constituencies concerned and the headquarters of the main political parties. Copies were also sent to the editors of local newspapers circulating in the area and to the local government press. Notices inserted in the local press announced the start of the review and invited comments from members of the public and from any interested bodies.

3. Luton Borough Council were invited to prepare a draft scheme of representation for our consideration. In doing so, they were asked to observe the rules laid down in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and the guidelines which we set out in our Report No 6 about the proposed size of the council and the proposed number of councillors for each ward. They were asked also to take into account any views expressed to them following their consultation with local interests. We therefore asked that they should publish details of their provisional proposals about a month before they submitted their draft scheme to us, thus allowing an opportunity for local comment.

4. The Council have not passed a resolution under section 7(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The provisions of section 7(6) will, therefore, apply and the elections of all district councillors will be held simultaneously.

5. On 8 November 1974 the Luton Borough Council presented their draft scheme of representation. They proposed to divide the area into 16 wards each returning 3 members to form a council of 48, the same number as at present.

6. We studied the Borough Council's scheme together with three alternative schemes which had been submitted by three of the local political parties, one of them covering only a part of the borough. Only one of the alternative schemes offered a standard of equality of representation comparable with that submitted by the Borough Council. It was less easy, on the limited information available to us and in the absence of local knowledge, to compare the relative merits of the different proposals in terms of their effects on local ties and communities. We concluded that the overall balance of advantage probably lay with the Borough Council's draft scheme and we decided, therefore, to use that scheme as the basis of our draft proposals. This would provide a basis for discussion before an Assistant Commissioner when the merits or otherwise of the alternatives could be argued and clarified on the ground.

7. In accepting the Council's scheme we decided to propose a number of modifications. One of these referred to the proposed Bramingham ward where we thought that the Borough Council's estimate of the size of the electorate by 1979/80 was probably over-optimistic. We thought it unlikely that the growth in the electorate of the ward in five years would be such as to justify more than two councillors and we decided to propose accordingly. The remaining modifications, which we made after consultation with the Ordnance Survey, comprised alterations to the alignments of some of the boundaries proposed by the Council in order to secure boundary lines which were more readily identifiable on the ground.

8. Subject to the changes referred to we concluded that the Borough Council's scheme represented a satisfactory basis for the future representation of the borough, in compliance with the requirements in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act and our guidelines, and we decided to formulate our draft proposals accordingly.

9. On 13 February 1975, we issued our draft proposals and these were sent to all who had received our consultation letter or had commented on the Council's draft scheme. The Council were asked to make these draft proposals and the accompanying map, which defined the proposed ward boundaries, available for inspection at their main offices. Representations on our draft proposals were invited from those to whom they were circulated and, by public notices, from other members of the public and interested bodies. We asked that any comments should reach us by 14 April 1975.

10. Luton Borough Council accepted our draft proposals subject to the allocation of three councillors instead of two, to the proposed Bramingham ward. Support for this modification was received from the Bedfordshire County Council. The Borough Council also proposed, and we accepted, a slight modification to the boundary of the Icknield and Stopsley wards.

11. One of the local political parties, which had previously made representations to us, reiterated their original proposals and requested the appointment of an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting where the issues involved could be argued.

12. A local action committee submitted a petition signed by 2,000 residents and electors of the Stopsley area objecting to our proposals for wards in that area and asked for an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting.

13. In view of these objections we considered that we needed further information to enable us to reach a conclusion. Therefore, in accordance with Section 65(2) of the 1972 Act, and at our request, you appointed Mr L J Slocombe as an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting and to report to us.

14. The Assistant Commissioner held a meeting at the Town Hall, Luton on 9 July 1975. On the same day he also visited the areas which were the subject of dispute. A copy (without enclosures) of his report to us of the meeting and of the inspection is attached at Schedule 1 to this report.

15. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that our draft proposals be approved subject to the allocation of 3 councillors for the proposed Bramingham ward.

16. We considered again our draft proposals in the light of the comments which we had received and of the Assistant Commissioner's Report. We concluded that the alteration recommended by the Assistant Commissioner should be adopted and, subject to this amendment, we decided to confirm our draft proposals as our final proposals.

17. Details of these final proposals are set out in Schedule 2 to this report and on the attached map. Schedule 2 gives the names of the wards and the number of councillors to be returned by each. The boundaries of the new wards are defined on the map.

PUBLICATION

18. In accordance with Section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, a copy of this report and a copy of the map are being sent to Luton Borough Council and will be available for public inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report are also being sent to those who received the consultation letter and to those who made comments. A detailed description of the boundaries of the proposed wards, as defined on the map, is set out in Schedule 3 to this report.

L.S.

Signed

EDMUND COMPTON (CHAIRMAN)

JOHN M RANKIN (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN)

DIANA ALBEMARLE

T C BENFIELD

MICHAEL CHISHOLM

ANDREW WHEATLEY

F B YOUNG

DAVID R SMITH (Secretary)

31 July 1975

5F

SCHEDULE 1

The Secretary
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Room 123
20 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TJ

Sir

Review of Electoral Arrangements

Borough of Luton, Bedfordshire.

In accordance with my appointment by the Secretary of State as an Assistant Commissioner and pursuant to the instructions contained in your letter of the 10th June 1975, I have the honour to submit the following report.

1. Date of Meeting

A local Meeting was held at the Town Hall, Luton, on Wednesday 9th July 1975 commencing at 10-30 a.m and concluding in the afternoon when visits and inspections were made.

2. Attendance

The signed attendance list accompanies this Report (Annex A). Those who spoke or participated in the proceedings are listed below :-

Luton Borough Council Mr A Collins, Chief Executive, Councillor K Hopkins, Mr S McArdle, Borough Planning Officer.

Stopsley Action Committee Mr A J Wright.

Luton Conservative Association Mr David Bone.

Luton Communist Party Dr. K R Bruckdorfer, Mr T Cole.

Bedfordshire County Council Mr K C Evans, County Secretary.

Luton Labour Party Mr A Carter, Secretary.

Each speaker had the opportunity of commenting on what had been said by others, in addition to making their own statements.

3. The Commission's Draft Proposals

The draft proposals followed quite closely the draft scheme prepared by the Borough Council but with the amendments mentioned below. The Borough Council's scheme was for a Council of 48 Members formed from 16 Wards each returning 3 Councillors.

The Commission's amendments were:

(a) a reduction in the number of Councillors assigned to the proposed Bramingham Ward from 3 to 2 Members. This reduction was made on the basis that the 1979 forecast electorate of the Ward was too optimistic.

(b) a number of fairly minor amendments to the proposed ward boundaries made on the recommendation of Ordnance Survey in the interests of good boundaries. A fair number of electors were affected, notably in the proposed South, Farley and Dallow Wards. I examined in detail all the proposals in (b) and ascertained from those present at the meeting that the amendments would be acceptable whatever the final decision on the draft proposals.

4. Comments on the Draft Proposals

A number of written comments were received commenting on or objecting to, the draft proposals. These comments are mentioned here in summary form but I deal with each fully in the main body of my report.

Luton Borough Council Generally accept the draft proposals but renew representations for 3 Councillors in the proposed Bramingham Ward.

Bedordshire County Council Support the Luton view that the proposed Bramingham Ward should be represented by 3 Councillors.

Luton Conservative Association Except for 4 Wards, the Association submitted an alternative scheme (based on a total of 16 Wards with 3 Councillors each). They do this on grounds of the divisive nature of the proposed East Circular Road, and the breaking of local ties and community interests.

Stopsley Action Committee Stress the self-contained nature of Stopsley Village, support this with a petition, object to draft proposals for Stopsley and produce alternatives to deal with this. Their proposals match in with those of the Conservative Association.

Generally Both support and opposition to the draft proposals was expressed at the meeting and is referred to later in this report.

5. Cases advanced at Meeting

The following paragraphs 6 to 12 deal with the cases advanced at the Meeting in support of, or against, the Commission's draft proposals. I also comment on the case put forward, in correspondence, by the Luton West Liberal Association who were not represented at the Meeting.

No new proposals arose at the Meeting. My assessment of the weight of arguments advanced at the Meeting is contained in paragraphs 14 to 18 below.

6. Luton Borough Council

Mr A Collins, Chief Executive, presented the case for the Council. He was supported, and supplemented, by Councillor K Hopkins, (a Member of the Council) and factual information and figures were supplied at my request by Mr S Mc Ardle, Borough Planning Officer. The Council had given careful consideration to the preparation of their draft scheme. They were in broad agreement with the Commissions draft proposals, had no further comment to make on Ward boundaries but pressed hard for 3 Councillors, not 2, for the proposed Bramingham Ward. Luton was a town which was substantially developed, there were 4000 people on the housing waiting list, apart from Bramingham there was very little land available for development, the main weight of new housing must be at Bramingham, the Council were determined to meet their housing responsibilities, they did not feel that their estimates of growth were too optimistic, the development was urgent and would be pushed ahead, the Council already owned about 60 acres of land which was vacant and immediately available. Although no formal planning consents had been issued they were confident there would be neither difficulty nor delay. The remaining 300 acres were in private ownership but no difficulty about acquisition was expected. There was no doubt that the vacant land would be developed and they considered that it would be most convenient for there to be 3 Councillors for the

proposed Bramingham Ward, resulting in a Council of 48 Members.
On the matter of community of interest and local ties the Council had paid close attention to this and adhered to local areas where possible, subject to the over-riding need to obtain a reasonable equality of representation. They did not accept the criticism of others that they had brushed aside considerations of community interest to secure a regularity of figures, they had looked carefully at physical boundaries and the location of convenient polling stations in the various polling districts of the proposed Wards. The nature of the town resulted in a changing population movement which could alter present community ties. So far as the Communist Party scheme was concerned they had considered this but did not feel that a Council of 60 was necessary for the size of the town. The Conservative Association scheme had not been before the Council. They noted the special interest of the Stopsley Action Committee but this was only one Ward and the Council had to look at the problems of the Borough as a whole. All those present fully supported 3 Councillors for the proposed Bramingham Ward and they hoped the Commission would agree. Councillor K Hopkins said he did not accept the arguments about the divisive nature of the proposed East Circular Road. His view was that roads were not divisive - they were links and distributors. The draft proposals included Wards which were divided by the M.1 and the Dunstable Road, only part of the proposed East Circular Road was likely to be built in the foreseeable future, this would be single carriageway and in his view no different to any other road. In summary the Borough Council accepted the draft proposals except they strongly pressed for 3 Councillors for the proposed Bramingham Ward.

7. Stopsley Action Committee

Mr A J Wright spoke on behalf of the Stopsley Action Committee which had collected and presented to the Commission a petition with 2000 signatures objecting to the Commission's draft proposals in relation to the proposed Stopsley Ward. The proposals of the Action Committee would also affect a proposed Wigmore Ward. They are quite satisfied with the present Ward boundaries but argue that if the rest of the town has to be re-warded then their special concern is to preserve the community known as Stopsley Village within one Ward represented by 3 Councillors. The area shown on the plan submitted with their letter to the Commission dated 11th April 1975 contains shops, churches, schools and the Stopsley Sports Centre and is separated by the land set aside for the proposed East Circular Road, part of which will start soon.
The sections of the present Stopsley Ward which they have cut off comprise Polling Districts 1E and 1F which can be added to their suggested Wigmore Ward. These contain the new developments which have least in common with the rest of the community and could in time develop into a new community in Wigmore where there is new development going on. There is little new building expected in Stopsley and they consider the line of the proposed East Circular Road (the present Ward boundary) a natural and proper boundary for their proposed Stopsley Ward. The figures were set out in detail in their letter of the 11th April 1975. The Action Committee's view was that roads formed a proper boundary, there was a good community feeling in Stopsley and Conservative and Liberal Councillors

had signed the petition. A map on a larger scale than that submitted previously was handed in.

8. Luton Conservative Association

Mr David Bone spoke in support of the case which he had put to the Commission on behalf of the Association in his letter of the 10th April 1975. He amplified and re-stated the basic points of objection previously made and handed in the aerial photographs, which should have accompanied his letter of the 10th April, and a further copy of a plan showing their proposals with an overlay indicating existing Wards and polling districts. The Association accept the basic format of increasing the number of present Wards from 12 to 16 to give 3 member Wards containing approximately 7600 electors. They feel however that in some of the Commission's draft proposals, especially in the eastern part of the town, the criteria of community of interest and easily identifiable boundaries in determining the new Wards have been seriously breached and that was the basis of his submission. The criteria are those referred to in paragraph 28 of the Commission's Report No.6 of the 22nd November 1973.

He mentioned that the physical nature of some boundaries and communities with local ties may not have been easily identifiable on the street map of Luton and this applies especially to the land reserved for the proposed East Circular Road which in their proposals forms the western boundaries of the Stopsley and Wigmore Wards. The aerial photographs now submitted very clearly demonstrates the physical nature of the boundary. He says this appears to have been completely ignored in the Commission's draft proposals. Part of the road will be started this year and if this is accepted as a natural boundary then their proposed Stopsley and Wigmore Wards follow logically and also preserve the Stopsley Community intact as mentioned by a previous Commissioner in his appraisal.

So far as the present High Town Ward is concerned, this is a clearly defined area of pre-war, largely homogeneous housing which the draft proposals cut up into 3 parts whereas their scheme keeps it intact except for polling district DC. In respect of Ward 14 (Crawley) there is some agreement with the Commission's proposals but the proposed East Circular Road would be the better boundary, and would have clear boundaries on all sides. So far as Ward 10 (Wardown) is concerned they are not very different to the Commission's draft proposals for Biscot Ward, except for the removal of polling district CC, west of the railway line. The Association realize that if their proposed alterations mentioned above are agreed then all remaining Wards would be affected, hence their submission of a complete scheme. In this, 4 Wards South (Central) Farley, Dallow and Lewsey agree with the Commission's draft proposals and Limbury Ward is nearly the same. In the whole of their consideration they have had regard to communities and boundaries and, where possible, used existing Ward and polling district boundaries. They submit their Scheme as the most satisfactory solution of the problem of re-warding Luton.

9. Luton Communist Party

Dr K R Bruckdorfer and Mr T Cole presented the case for their party in amplification of their letter to the Borough Council of the 8th April 1974.

In brief their proposal is for a Council of 60 Members elected from 20 Wards each of 3 Members.

Luton is an important town including a lot of industry and an airport and should, in their view, have the maximum size of Council within the range suggested for district councils. This was a democratic approach and gives the best possible representation. In order to help people solve their problems the smaller the number of electors per Councillor the better. The Councillor could more easily know his electorate and vice versa. They referred to the size of Councils in Bedfordshire - Bedford 56 South Beds 45 and Mid-Beds 49 - all of which give a smaller electorate per Councillor. In particular rural areas seemed better represented and the town dweller should not suffer this disadvantage; their proposals would redress the balance.

They considered that the 16 proposed Wards would not represent communities and illustrated this by examples in Saints, Central, Stopsley and Bramingham Wards. They would, however, give support to 3 Councillors for the proposed Bramingham Ward.

On the matter of community of interest they claimed to know as much about this as anyone and were aware of known centres with which people identified themselves and engaged in their day to day activities. Their scheme had this as its basis as well as realizing the need for equality of representation. In their view it was a scheme entirely suitable for a democratic Council.

10. Bedordshire County Council

Mr K C Evans, County Secretary, said the County Council supported the representations by the Borough Council for 3 Councillors for the Bramingham Ward and supported the idea of 16 Wards each with 3 Councillors. He had no adverse comments on the draft proposals, the details of which were a matter for the Borough Council. As an expression of general view he preferred Ward boundaries not down the centre of roads but at the back of houses, this avoided dividing near neighbours across a road into different Wards.

11. Luton Labour Party

Mr A Carter expressed the views of the Luton Labour Party. His party was in complete support of the Commission's draft proposals, except in relation to the point about 3 Councillors for Bramingham, where they supported the Borough Council's viewpoint.

He disagreed completely with the proposals of both the Stopsley Action Committee and the Conservative Association. There was no special virtue about the Round Green area, which, up to 1965, had been in Stopsley Ward and was now being returned there in the draft proposals. He did not regard the proposed East Circular Road as divisive in any way and did not agree with it being used as a major point in determining boundaries. There were already near-by parallel roads on either side and the new road would be no more divisive than any other. He did not agree with the Wards proposed by the Conservative Association, claimed they did not represent communities and illustrated this with reference to school catchment areas in Putteridge Ward, polling places in Biscot Ward and the correct split between Sundon Park/Leagrave Wards. He would accept a railway line as a reasonable barrier but not a road. He had been a Councillor at one time (for 6 years), knew the area well. Knew its communities and considered the draft proposals were correct, and asked that they should be approved, but with 3 Councillors for Bramingham.

12. Luton West Liberal Association

I considered a letter dated 24th March 1973 addressed to the Borough Council from this Association which proposed 9 Wards with 27 Councillors for the West Division of Luton. I believe the 2 Divisions are of equal size and hence such proposals, in fairness, must have meant 18 Wards and 54 Councillors. In the West Division the electorate per Councillor would have been 2169 which is considerably below the figures of the Commission, the Borough Council and the Conservative Association. As there was no appearance at the Meeting I do not refer to this matter again.

13. Inspections

I visited various parts of the town to see places that I considered important as well as those which the parties wished me to see. I was accompanied by Mr Collins (Borough Council) Mr Bone (Conservative Association) Mr Carter (Labour Party) Councillor Hopkins (Borough Council) and Mr Wright (Stopsley Action Committee).

I saw Marsh Road, Sundon Park, Marsh Farm area, the natural escarpment, Bramingham Farm area, Stockingstone Road, the Round Green area, Stopsley Village, the developing areas of Wigmore and the site of the proposed East Circular Road at all four available points, namely Hitchin Road, Harrowden Road/Eaton Green Road, Crawley Green Road and Turners Road. Further reference to specific points arising from the visits and consideration of the evidence will be made in subsequent paragraphs of the report.

14. Assessment of weight of arguments

At the end of the arguments and visit I came to the conclusion that there were 3, possibly 4, key points on which a careful assessment was required before I made a firm recommendation; (a) Bramingham Ward - the scale and timetable of development (b) the East Circular Road - its construction and whether or not it had any divisive effect (c) the question of community of interest and local ties and (d) Stopsley Village - which is affected by considerations (b) and (c). I will deal with each of these in turn.

15. Bramingham Ward

The point at issue here is, not whether the vacant land will be developed, but when and at what rate. The Borough Council are extremely keen to get started with development and all parties present at the Meeting were in agreement that the Commission's scheme should provide now for 3 Councillors for the Ward. My task is to assess the probabilities. There is a total of about 360 acres of land, of this, 60 acres are owned by the Council, i.e that part west of the woods. There are no tenancies, and immediate entry could be made for building purposes, subject to planning consent. The other 300 acres is privately owned and is being actively farmed by the owner. I saw this land which has an extensive road frontage to Icknield Way. I was informed that of this 300 acres, about 165 acres will be available for residential development, the remainder being taken up by schools, shops and other community buildings. Thus allowing this 165 acres plus say 50 acres of the Council's land there is a total of 215 acres for residential use. No detailed density figures are available but the Borough Council were thinking of 2000/2500 dwellings. Taking a figure of around 2.2 electors per dwelling this would give the estimated growth figure of 4836 for 1979 as shown

in the Borough Council's scheme. So far, so good, but what about the timing?- here I am on much more speculative ground. I examined in detail the percentage growth rates in the Borough Council's scheme and the Conservative Association scheme. In the former the growth rate no where (except Bramingham) exceeded 13% and the overall average, even inflated by the Bramingham figure, was about 10%. In the Conservative Scheme, by reason of different boundaries, there were 4 Wards where there were peaks well above the average, Wigmore 23% Wardown 22% Bramingham 79% and Marsh Farm 37%. Wigmore and Marsh Farm are both areas of present development. Perhaps therefore it would be safe to think that about 30% (average of 23% and 37%) is a reasonable figure over the 5 year period of growth in a building development area, unless there are special circumstances. The Borough Council urge that Bramingham is special and there will be accelerated growth by reason of the urgent housing needs. I now examine the possibilities and accept as a basis the point that there will be no difficulty about planning consents, nor of acquisition and possession of the privately owned land. Take the Council's 50 acres of building land and assume it will accomodate 600 houses, with a determined effort work could start next year and all houses be completed and occupied by 10th October 1978 - the critical date for the 1979 Register. Thus we add 1320 electors to the existing 2545 - total 3865.

Of the privately owned land I doubt very much whether any substantial portion can be developed by 1979. If the various planning and other processes are pushed forward similtaneously with the Council's development, then my most optimistic forecast of building progress would not exceed another 500 houses by the critical date - another 1100 electors - grand total of 4965 by 1979. On this speculative calculation I must agree with the Commission's view that the growth rates forecast by the Borough Council are too optimistic. Nevertheless if 3 Councillors are allotted to the Ward it will be a minor anomaly which will soon be corrected after 1979. All parties at the meeting support the Borough Council and I will include my own recommendation to that effect on the ground of administrative convenience to the new Borough Council.

16. East Circular Road

This road figured heavily in the arguments of both Conservative Association and the Stopsley Action Committee cases. I have ascertained a number of facts about its construction and will also tackle the more difficult problem of assessing whether it is divisive or not.

The East Circular road has been shown on various maps for many years and some of the land for it has been in the ownership and possession of the highway authority for a long time. I had a look at all four junctions of the section which is likely to start next year namely Harrowden Road/Eaton Green Road (where it will start), Crawley Green Road, Turners Road, and Hitchin Road (where it will finish for the time being). All these accesses will be preserved except that the junction at Turners Road may be for pedestrians only subject to the appropriate legal processes. The land is considerably overgrown in parts with trees, shrubs, grass etc and has been in that condition for some time. So far as the section north of the Hitchin Road junction (where the present

scheme will stop) the Council only own about 400 yards northwards and this was bought under a Purchase Notice served by a builder. From the information I received I think it highly unlikely that this northern section will be built in the foreseable future, although it still remains on the plans. Should there be any further funds available for this road it is likely that the Borough Council will press for a southern extension downwards towards the M.1. As will have been noted from the statements at the hearing there is a fundamental difference of opinion as to whether this East Circular Road has any divisive effect. The Conservative Association and the Stopsley Action Committee say it has a great effect and should be used as a natural boundary of the Wards. The Borough Council and the Labour Party say it has no such effect and is just an ordinary road. Having examined the line of the road, considered the statements, looked at the many parallel roads in the vicinity I am of the opinion that the proposed East Circular Road does not have a dominating effect on Ward boundaries and I reject the notion of divisiveness on any substantial scale.

17. Community of Interest

The concept of community interest is one which is most difficult to deal with in any quantitative way. All the various schemes before me were said to be based on an adherence to the principles of community interest yet all produced different results. In no case, with the possible exception of Stopsley, was I able to get specific and detailed explanations as to why one scheme was better than another based on the criteria of community interest and local ties. I have given a good deal of most careful consideration to this problem and in the end believe that no absolute measurable standards can be found. All sorts of considerations such as school catchment areas, shopping centres and local interests are mentioned. None are conclusive and things often change by reason of new development, clearances and re-developments or by the natural shifting of population from one area to another. I will translate these rather negative conclusions into specific statements when summarizing my comments on the alternative schemes.

18. Stopsley Village

I found the case put by the Stopsley Action Committee of great interest and would have been happy if I could have found an acceptable solution. Having rejected the idea of the divisive nature of the East Circular Road I was left with the community interest concept. I am satisfied that there is a genuine local interest and this was evidenced by the 2000 signature petition. I sought hard to meet the Stopsley Village case by juggling about with figures, by adding and subtracting areas but whatever I did had a disastrous effect on other Wards and I finally had to abandon the effort. Both the Borough Council and the Commission have had to look at the town as a whole and in this case I feel, albeit with some regret, that the greatest good of the greatest number must prevail.

19. Summary of Conclusions

(a) Luton Communist Party

Without entering upon any long discussion upon the real meaning of democracy, or the

various roles played by Councillors, I see no real reason for increasing the size of the Borough Council to 60 and accordingly do not support their scheme. I am content to rely on the judgement of the Borough Council.

(b) Luton Conservative Association

Having rejected the arguments about the East Circular Road their scheme falls back on community interest considerations. I am not convinced that their scheme is any better that the draft proposals. Had I been satisfied that the community interest features were clearly and demonstrably better, then I would have second thoughts. I cannot support their scheme but would say that if the scheme had been before me as the Commissions proposals and in the absence of any others as good, I would have recommended its acceptance, as it is well prepared and well documented.

(c) Stopsley Action Committee

I failed their scheme on road considerations, thought there was a community interest but reluctantly reject it on the grounds of inability to fit in with the remainder of the proposals.

20. Enclosures

I forward with this report the plans and the aerial photographs and plan and overlay referred to in paragraphs 7 and 8.

21. Acknowledgments

I record my thanks for the assistance I received from all parties present in supplying me with information I required and for their clear and cogent presentation of their cases.

22. Recommendation

I recommend that the Commission's draft proposals be approved subject to the allocation of 3 Councillors for the proposed Bramingham Ward, resulting in a scheme for 16 Wards, each returning 3 Councillors. All parties are anxious for an early decision by the Commission and the Secretary of State and I endorse their request.

I am, Sir

Your obedient Servant

Assistant Commissioner

14th July 1975

SCHEDULE 2

BOROUGH OF LUTON: NAMES OF PROPOSED WARDS AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

NAME OF WARD	NO.OF COUNCILLORS
BISCOT	3
BRAMINGHAM	3
CHALLNEY	3
CRAWLEY	3
DALLOW	3
FARLEY	3
HIGH TOWN	3
ICKNIELD	3
LEAGRAVE	3
LEWSEY	3
LIMBURY	3
PUTTERIDGE	3
SAINTS	3
SOUTH	3
STOPSLEY	3
SUNDON PARK	3

BOROUGH OF LUTON : DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARIES

BRAMINGHAM WARD

Commencing on the northern boundary of the District at its junction with Warden Hill Road thence westwards along said road to Barton Road thence northwards along said road to Icknield Way thence south westwards along said way to Bramingham Road thence westwards and southwestwards along said road to a point being a prolongation south eastwards of the rear boundaries of Nos 1 to 19 Alesia Road thence north westwards along said prolongation said rear boundaries and continuing along Alesia Road to Lygetun Drive thence north eastwards along said drive to Flint Close thence north westwards and north eastwards along said close to a footpath to the north of No 43 in said close thence north westwards along said footpath to a footpath leading to Waulds Bank Drive thence south westwards along said footpath to and north westwards along a footpath adjacent to the north eastern boundaries of Nos 38 to 64 Thrales Close thence south westwards and westwards along the footpath leading to Waulds Bank Drive thence northwards along said drive to The Moakes thence north eastwards along the Moakes to a footpath leading to Whitefield Primary School thence north westwards along said footpath to and westwards along the southern boundary of said school to Waulds Bank Drive thence generally northwards along said drive an un-named road and in prolongation thereof to the northern boundary of the District thence generally eastwards and southwards following said northern boundary to the point of commencement.

ICKNIELD WARD

Commencing at a point where the southern boundary of Bramingham Ward meets the northern boundary of the District thence generally south eastwards following said northern boundary to a footpath from Common Farm to Fairford Avenue thence south eastwards and southwards along said footpath and avenue to a point opposite the northern boundary of No 40 in said avenue

thence eastwards to and along said boundary and generally southwards along the rear boundaries of properties No 40 to 4 in Fairford Avenue and in prolongation thereof to the northern boundary of No 46 Badgers Hill Road thence westwards and southwards along the northern and eastern boundary of said property to the northern boundary of No 7 Honeygate thence eastwards along said boundary and generally southwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 7-8-9 Honeygate to and along the rear boundaries of Nos 40 to 20 Knoll Rise, the eastern boundary of No 18 Knoll Rise and continuing along the rear boundaries of the properties on the eastern side of Chartwell Drive to a point opposite the northeastern corner of No 228 Stockstone Road thence eastwards to and southwards along the eastern boundary of said property and in prolongation thereof to said road thence westward along said road to New Bedford Road thence northwards along said road to a point opposite the southern boundary of No 341 in said road thence westwards to and along said boundary and rear boundaries of Nos 37 to 47 Rosslyn Crescent and continuing along the rear boundary of No 49 in said crescent to its southern most corner thence in a straight line to and along the southern boundary of No 45 Broughton Avenue and in a prolongation thereof to the River Lea thence northwestward along the said river to Birdsfoot Lane thence northwards along said lane to Catsbrooke Road thence northwestwards along said to Icknield Way thence northeastwards following said road to the southern boundary of Bramingham Ward thence continuing northeastwards and eastwards following said boundary to the point of commencement.

LIMBURY WARD

Commencing at a point where the southern boundary of Bramingham Ward meets the western boundary of Icknield Ward thence generally southwards following said western boundary and continuing along Birdsfoot Lane to Nunnery Lane thence continuing southwards along said lane to Trinity Road thence northwestwards along said road to Blundell Road thence southwestwards along said road to the Luton-Bedford railway thence northwestwards along said railway to Bramingham Road thence northeastwards along said road to and continuing along the southern boundary of Bramingham Ward to the point of commencement.

SAINTS WARD

Commencing at a point where the western boundary of Icknield Ward meets Montrose Avenue thence westward along said avenue and Woodland Avenue to Leagrave Road thence southwards in a straight line to the northwest corner of No 160 Selbourne Road thence south westwards along the north western boundary of said property to and along the northwestern boundary of No 109 in said road and continuing along the rear boundaries of Nos 65 and 1 Grantham Road and north western boundary of No 366 Dunstable Road to said road thence north wastwards along said road to Waller Avenue thence generally north eastwards along said avenue and continuing along the south-eastern boundary of Limbury Ward thence eastwards and southwards following the western boundary of Icknield Ward to the point of commencement.

BISCOT WARD

Commencing at a point where the south eastern boundary of Saints Ward meets the eastern boundary of Icknield Ward thence southwards along New Bedford Road to a point opposite the rear boundary of No 1 Studley Road thence south westwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 1 to 41 in said road and northern boundary of No 10 Biscot Road to said road thence south eastwards along said road and Moor Path and in continuation thereof to the Luton-Bedford railway thence south eastwards along said railway to Guildford Street thence southwards along said street to the Luton-Dunstable railway thence westwards along said railway to a point being in prolongation south westwards of the eastern boundary of the Luton Football Ground thence north eastward and north westwards to and along the eastern and northern boundaries of said ground to Beech Road thence north eastwards along said road to Dunstable Road thence northwestwards along said road to the south eastern boundary of Saints Ward thence generally north eastwards following said boundary to the point of commencement.

HIGH TOWN WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of Biscot Ward meets the southern boundary of Icknield Ward thence eastwards following said southern boundary and continuing generally south eastwards along Stockingstone Road to Hitchin Road thence southwards along said road and Hart Lane to a point opposite the northern boundary of No 99 Hart Lane thence westwards to and along said boundary thence south eastwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 99 to 77 Hart Lane thence south westwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 2 to 40 Tower Road to the footpath leading to Brooms Road thence southwards along said footpath and Brooms Road to a point opposite the northern boundary of No 4 in said road thence westwards and southwards to and along said boundary and rear boundaries of Nos 4 to 74 Brooms Road thence southwestwards southwards and south eastwards along the rear boundaires of Nos 22 to 42 and Nos 57 to 53 Whitecroft Road and the southern boundary of No 63 Crawley Green Road and in prolongation thereof to said road thence southwestwards along said road to the Main Line railway thence north westwards following the main Luton-Bedford railway line to and continuing northwestwards and generally northwards following the eastern boundary of Biscot Ward to the point of commencement.

STOPSLEY WARD

Commencing at the point where Hitchin Road meet the eastern boundary of the District thence southwestwards along said road to Cannon Lane thence southeastwards along said lane to Putteridge Road thence southwestwards along said road to a point opposite the north western boundary of No 2 Hawthorne Avenue thence southwestwards to and along said boundary and northwestern boundary of No 31 Ashcroft Road to said road thence south east ward along Ascroft Road and Wigmore Lane to a point opposite the southern boundary of No 29 in said lane thence generally eastwards following said boundary and rear boundaries of Nos 61 to 1 Green Lane and southwestern boundary of No 27 Sowerby Avenue and continuing south eastwards along the

north eastern boundary of No 36 in said avenue thence south westwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 36 to 20 and in a straight line to and along the rear boundaries of Nos 14 and 12 all in said avenue and continuing along the south eastern boundary of No 73 Wigmore Lane to said lane thence north westwards along said lane to Croft Road thence south-westwards along said road to Hallwick Road thence south eastwards along said road to The Severalls thence southwestwards along The Severalls to Little Church Road thence south eastwards along said road to a point opposite the southern boundary of No 30 in said road thence south westwards along said boundary and rear boundaries of Nos 15 to 28 Sibley Close and southern boundary of No 227 Ashcroft Road to said road thence south east-wards along said road to Crawley Green Road thence south west wards along said road to a point in prolongation southeastwards of the rear boundary of No 77 Saywell Road thence northwestwards along said prolongation and the rear boundaries of Nos 77 to 19 in said road and in prolongation of last mentioned boundary to a point opposite the northern boundary of No 15 in said road, thence southwestwards along the northern boundary of No 15 in said road, No 41 Walcot Avenue and rear boundaries of Nos 39 to 17 Bloomfield Avenue and south eastwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 51 and 53 Stanford Road and south westwards along the northern boundaries of Nos 55 and 60 Stanford Road thence northwestwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 15 to 1 Bloomfield Avenue Nos 51 to 43 Elmore Road thence southwestwards along the northern boundary of last mentioned property and rear boundary of Elmfield Court and Nos 45 43 and 48 Kenneth Road and continuing southwestwards and southwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 2 to 40 Abbots Wood Road to a point opposite the northern boundary of No 140 Hart Lane thence southwestwards to and along said boundary to the eastern boundary of High Town Ward. thence generally northwards following said eastern boundary and eastern boundary of Icknield Ward to and eastwards and southwards following the northern and eastern boundary of the District to the point of commencement.

PUTTERIDGE WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of Stopsley Ward meets the eastern boundary of the District thence generally south eastwards following said eastern boundary to Eaton Green Road thence generally westwards and northwestwards along said road and Wigmore Bottom to Crawley Green Road thence westwards along said road to the eastern boundary of Stopsley Ward thence generally northwards following said eastern boundary to the point of commencement.

CRAWLEY WARD

Commencing at a point where the southern boundary of Putteridge Ward meets the eastern boundary of the District thence southwards and westwards following the eastern and southern boundary of the District to the main Railway thence north westwards along said railway to the eastern boundary of Hightown Ward thence generally northwards and eastwards following said eastern boundary and southern boundaries of Stopsley Ward and Putteridge Ward to the point of commencement.

SOUTH WARD

Commencing at a point where the south west boundary of Crawley Ward meets the southern boundary of the District thence southwestwards and northwestwards following said southern boundary to the Luton-Caddington road thence east wards and northeastwards along Farley Hill to Windsor Street thence north westwards along said street to Wellington Street thence north eastwards along said street to Dumfries Street thence westwards along said street and Western Road to the southern boundary of the Cemetery thence continuing southwestwards along the southern and north westwards along the western boundaries of the Cemetery to the rear boundary of No 29 Downs Road thence westwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 29 to 37 Downs Road and continuing generally westwards along a hedge and in-prolongation thereof to National Grid reference 0805121123 thence north eastwards to the rear

boundary of No 69 Ashburnham Road thence south east wards along the rear boundaries of Nos 69 to 35 in said road and northeast wards along the eastern boundary of last mentioned property to Ashburnham Road thence eastwards along said road to Brantwood Road thence northwards along said road to Dallow Road thence eastwards along said road to a point opposite the western boundary of Luton Dunstable Road Junior School thence northwards along said western boundary and western boundary of the Infants School and in prolongation thereof to the southern boundary of Biscot Ward thence generally eastwards and southeastwards following said southern boundary the southern boundary of High Town Ward and southwestern boundary of Crawley Ward to the point of commencement.

FARLEY WARD

Commencing at a point where the northern boundary of Parcel No 0006 as shown on 1:2500 Ordnance Survey Plan TL 06/0721 Edition 1972 meets the south eastern boundary of the District thence eastwards along said northern boundary to the rear boundary of No 9 Bluebell Wood Close thence generally northwards and eastwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 9 and 10 Bluebell Wood Close Nos 20 to 50 High Wood Close Nos 58 to 2 Longcroft Road and south eastwards along the eastern boundary of last mentioned property to said road thence eastwards along said road to a point opposite the western boundary of No 185 Ashburnham Road thence southwards to and along said boundary and continuing southwards and generally eastwards along the northern boundary of Parcel No 0021 to the southern boundary of No 89 Ashburnham Road thence continuing along the rear boundaries of No 89 to 71 and southwards along the western boundary of No 69 in Ashburnham Road to the western boundary of South Ward thence generally southwards southeastwards and southwestward following said boundary to and north westwards following the south eastern boundary of the District to the point of commencement.

DALLOW WARD

Commencing at a point where the Luton Dunstable railway meets the south eastern boundaries of the District, thence eastwards along said railway to Chaul End Lane thence northwards along said lane to Dunstable road thence eastward along said road and continuing generally south eastwards following the southern boundaries of Saints Ward and Biscot Ward and southwards and westwards following the western boundary of South Ward and northern boundary of Farley Ward to the south eastern boundary of the District thence northwestwards following said boundary to the point of commencement.

CHALLNEY WARD

Commencing at a point where the Dunstable Road meets the south eastern boundary of the District thence north east ward along said road to Lewsey Road thence northwestwards along said road crossing Leagrave High Street and continuing along the rear of properties Nos 1 to 7 Holgate Drive Nos 1-3 and 11 and 13 to 23 Loftus Close to a tributary stream of the River Lea thence northeast wards along said stream to the M1 Motorway thence southeastwards along the motorway to a point being a prolongation south westwards of the footpath leading to Ely Way thence north eastwards to and along said footpath and Ely Way to Oakley Road thence south eastwards along said road to Roman Road thence north eastwards along said road to the south eastern boundary of Limbury Ward thence south eastwards following said boundary and generally south westwards and westwards following the western boundary of Saints Ward and northern boundary of Dallow Ward to the south eastern boundary of the District thence continuing westwards and northwards following said District boundary to the point of commencement.

LEWSEY WARD

Commencing at a point where the M1 motorway meets the western boundary of the District thence south eastwards along the motorway to the northern boundary of Challney Ward south westward south eastward and west ward following said boundary to the western boundary of the District thence north westwards and north eastwards following said boundary to the point of commencement.

LEAGRAVE WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of Lewsey Ward meets the Western boundary of the District thence north eastward following the District boundary to the main Luton-Bedford railway thence south eastwards along said railway and southeastern boundary of Limbury Ward to the northern

boundary of Challney Ward thence generally westwards following said northern boundary to the eastern boundary of Lewsey Ward thence north westwards following said boundary to the point of commencement.

SUNDON PARK WARD

Commencing at a point where the western boundary of Bramingham Ward meets the northern boundary of the District thence generally southwards following said western boundary to and south westwards following the northeastern boundary of Limbury Ward to and north westwards following the northeastern boundary of Leagrave Ward to the northern boundary of the District thence eastwards following said boundary to the point of commencement.